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A
S E R M O N
ON THE
DELIVERANCE
OF THE
THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND
FROM THE
I N V A S I O N
LATELY ATTEMPTED
BY THE FRENCH,

Preached in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin, on the 1st
of January, 1797; and in St. PETER's on the 8th of January;
and preached in the same Church on January 15th, at the Re-
quest of the Parishioners in Vestry assembled;

AND
PUBLISHED AT THEIR DESIRE,
BY THE
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M DCC XCVII.

A

SERMON, &c.

DANIEL IV. 25, 27.

The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will; wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

SUCH was the awful warning which the prophet addressed to the haughty monarch of Babylon, whom long prosperity had elated with such impious pride, that he forgot that Supreme Being, from whose favour alone he had derived that prosperity, and from whose protection alone he could hope for its continuance.

The events which have occurred since the hour when we so lately assembled in this sacred place, to

celebrate the Birth of our Redeemer, and which have almost irresistibly arrested the attention of all to whom I now address myself, have surely been of such a nature as to impress on every serious mind the awful warning of the prophet.

The dangers of war, which had so long remotely threatened us, seemed now ready to burst upon our heads, and involve in the issue of the doubtful conflict every thing dear to the man, the patriot, and the christian. At this trying hour every rank, and age, and profession, amongst us, capable of bearing arms in their country's defence, have pressed forward with eager emulation to protect their property, their liberty, their religion; the great and opulent have forsaken the blandishments of ease and luxury; the exchange, the senate, and the bar, have sent forth their busy numbers to guard, in military array, the safety of the state; and even the youthful student has suspended his pursuit of literary knowledge and literary fame, to croud round the standard of his Country and his King, and defend the sacred cause of Freedom and Christianity. Such conduct, at such a crisis, was worthy of minds such as yours, my countrymen. The approach of danger served not to damp, but to animate your courage—not to thin, but to multiply your bands; the approbation of your conscience, and the gratitude of your country, will reward and animate your exertions. But amidst this
 busy

busy stir of arms, amidst this eager application to such secondary means of safety as human aid can supply, it cannot escape the seriously religious mind, that the sure source of confidence, the sure prop and stay of public safety and public happiness, must ever be found in the protection of that all-powerful hand, who alone controuls and decides the effect of all secondary means, without whose aid all human hope and help is vain; of that God, who *ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*, who dispenses life and death, peace and war, amongst the nations of the earth, *all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, who is able to abase them who walk in pride, and punish them who tread the paths of iniquity.*†

With this conviction deeply impressed upon my heart, I am anxious to avail myself of this occasion, so well adapted to strengthen that impresson upon your hearts, my fellow Christians; I am anxious to direct your attention to the perpetual superintendence of Divine Providence, as that which controuls all the vicissitudes of human life; and to rouse you to cultivate in yourselves, and in others, that spirit of pious gratitude and Christian union, that watchful self-government and humble penitence, and that general and permanent reformation, which alone can draw down on your country the blessing of your God.

† Daniel iv. 37.

With

With such an intention only do I now address you. I have ever been unwilling to advert to any political events from this place; nothing is more unbecoming the ministers of God, than to give the least grounds of suspicion, that they would stoop to be the instruments of mean adulation on the one side, or factious abuse on the other; and it is scarcely possible to speak of political affairs without subjecting ourselves to such a suspicion. As little would I wish to aggravate the bitterness of hatred against our enemies, or conceal my regret that we are yet compelled to call them enemies. No:—the ministers of peace should never cease to inculcate the sacred duties of mercy, and kindness, and brotherly love; and never should Christians of every description cease to deplore, and, as far as is possible, to appease the miseries of war. Are our enemies violent and vindictive;—it is our duty to protect ourselves indeed against their violence, but not to suffer ourselves to be infected with the contagion of that fury, the consequences of which we lament. Are they deluded, irreligious, and profane;—it should be our anxious wish that they might be enlightened and reformed, not exterminated or destroyed. With these sentiments, my fellow-Christians, it is my present purpose to allude no further to political events than may contribute to convince us of the superintending Providence of God. I will endeavour to direct your attention less
to

to the guilt and the impiety of our enemies, than to the licentiousness and irreligion which too fatally prevail among ourselves; that we may be led to atone for our past errors, by deep and heart-felt repentance, and *break off our sins by righteousness, if it may be a lengthening of our tranquillity.*

It is not, I trust, necessary to enter into any laboured detail of abstract arguments, in order to prove the existence of a superintending Providence, before this enlightened and Christian assembly. You never can doubt that the supreme JEHOVAH is all-wise to perceive, and all-powerful to direct, every event, however minute or however important, whether it decides the happiness of the individual, or the welfare of the state. You cannot doubt that this infinite wisdom and resistless power is directed by long-suffering mercy, combined with justice, most strict, most impartial, most unchangeable. Can it then be supposed that the Creator and Ruler of the universe, *without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, by whom the very hairs of our head are numbered,** will regard with indifference those events which are most directly connected with the great system of his moral government, and which most decisively influence the conduct and happiness of the human race, even the vicissitudes of national character and national prosperity?—Oh, no, my fellow Christians, this cannot

* Matthew x. 29, 30.

be.—Attend to the deduction of the soundest reason, very recently stated on an occasion similar to this, which I will repeat in the words of its author,† because I would not attempt to alter what I cannot hope to improve. “ If we reflect that man is not an un-
 “ connected being, but by his nature dependant on
 “ and influenced by his fellow-creatures; if we re-
 “ flect that by this sympathetic sociability of original
 “ disposition, mankind are collected into communi-
 “ ties, whose manners not only are the result of the
 “ manners of the individuals who compose them, but
 “ reciprocally, by that same sympathetic influence
 “ which gave them birth, modify the manners of
 “ each individual, these great masses of mankind will
 “ appear to us not as ideal persons, whose misconduct
 “ must experience its appropriate punishment, but
 “ as the instruments by which the great scheme of
 “ human improvement is to be promoted. Commu-
 “ nities therefore, considered as aggregates of indivi-
 “ duals, mutually influencing the manners of each
 “ other, must be regarded as the moral instruments
 “ by which the purposes of our Creator are accom-
 “ plished; and it is therefore reasonable to believe,
 “ that when any of these systems is so far corrupted
 “ as to become unfit for the accomplishment of the
 “ purposes of wisdom and goodness; when it is be-

† Fast Sermon, preached in Trinity College, 9th March, 1796, by the Rev. George Miller, F. T. C. D.—page 18, 19, 20.

“ come

“ come so far corrupted, that the mutual influences
 “ of its members can have no other effect than to
 “ vitiate what is yet sound, and to render still more
 “ enormous the corruption of the rest ; it is, I say, in
 “ such a case, reasonable to believe that this cor-
 “ rupted system shall be dissolved. From a considera-
 “ tion, therefore, of the nature of man, and the
 “ moral attributes of his Creator, we can deduce a
 “ satisfactory reason for the persuasion that Provi-
 “ dence will visibly chastise the profligacy of a cor-
 “ rupted nation.”

Such, my fellow Christians, are the conclusions of
 reason harmonizing with the clearest revelations of
 the Divine Will, and the whole history of mankind.
 —Peruse those prophecies, which foretell the fortunes
 of the various empires of the ancient world; and,
 after having contemplated their exact accomplishment,
 question if you can the reality of a superintending
 Providence. Look round the world, and examine
 the present appearances and acknowledged facts,
 which are constantly appealed to in proof of such ac-
 complishment, and judge whether you can deny the
 conclusiveness of the argument. Behold Nineveh*
 and Babylon, Tyre and Sidon, and Egypt, which had
 enjoyed the highest prosperity, and abused that pros-
 perity by the most base idolatry, and the most foul

* Bishop Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, vol. i.

corruption,

corruption, despising the power of the true God, and delighting to oppress his people: See them now sunk in ruin, and continuing in that permanent degradation which the prophets had denounced;—thus, also, contemplate the unprecedented character and fortunes of the Arabian tribes, foretold before the birth of their great progenitor Ishmael. View the fate of the four great nations, which successively swayed the empire of the world, distinctly sketched in the prophecies of Daniel; and above all the history of the Jewish nation, for above three thousand years a living witness of the superintending Providence of the great JEHOVAH, and still existing in a state unexampled in history, for near eighteen centuries dispersed through every nation, but united with none; still preserved distinct in its language, manners, and its religion, to bear testimony to the genuineness of those prophecies to which Christianity appeals, and accomplish the yet inscrutable purposes of that JEHOVAH whom they adore. When we have contemplated such a multitude of facts, foretold in a series of predictions, which reach from the creation of the world to its close, which have been hitherto exactly fulfilled, and are at this moment accomplishing almost within our sight; who can be blind enough to doubt, or hardy enough to despise the direct superintendence of the God of Hosts, *Who doeth as he will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth,*

*earth, and none can stay his hand, or say what dost thou?**

But if from general arguments and remote experience, we turn to the history of our own nation, and the experience of the present age, what multiplied proofs shall we find of an unseen hand, overruling the designs, and baffling the counsels of feeble, short-sighted man, bringing about events, the most contrary to the designs of those by whose agency they were wrought, and leading to effects the most remote from their views.—Look to the origin of that Reformation which freed these nations from the errors and abuses, which had so long corrupted and debased Christianity.—By whom was its introduction into this empire first prepared? By a monarch rigidly bigotted to that superstition, whose foundations he subverted; and who had assumed and gloried in the title of ‘ Defender of that faith,’ whose dominion he finally overthrew. Was there no providential interference in shortening the reign of one queen, whose furious bigotry would have checked or extinguished the light of that reformation, by unceasing persecution, and in prolonging the government of her illustrious sister, whose wisdom and firmness fixed it on the solid basis on which to this day it rests?—When the invincible Armada prepared to overwhelm her apparently unequal strength, who would have supposed the attempt

* Daniel iv. 35.

would

would have terminated in establishing her power, and securing to Britain the dominion of the sea?—When in the reign of her successor, the king, and nobles, and senate, were, as at the next hour, to be extirpated by a single blow; was no providential interference conspicuous in defeating this matured and deep-laid plot by the accidental delivery, and the conjectural interpretation, of an obscure and anonymous note?—When the whole empire was, for a succession of years, convulsed by the opposition of royalists and republicans, the agitation of ambition and fanaticism, the claims of rival kings, and the fury of civil and religious war, who could have hoped that from this dark and turbid scene should rise the august structure of the British constitution, adorned with new beauties and consolidated with new strength? Who could have hoped, that by the very same struggle the foundation should be laid in the British Colonies, of that mighty empire which has since been established in the new world, and which has diffused over so great a portion of the globe the knowledge of true religion, and the blessings of civil liberty?

I have submitted to you, my fellow-Christians, this brief imperfect sketch of some of the most signal interpositions of Providence for the support of ~~true~~ religion, and the extension of human happiness in these latter days, to animate you with confidence and hope, however deep and impenetrable the gloom which

which now overpreads the European world:—doubtful and remote indeed does the final catastrophe appear of the present tragic scene. Battle after battle has been fought, army after army has been cut off, negociation after negociation has been commenced and abandoned;—and what prospect now presents itself to the eye of political speculation, —what step can now be taken to terminate the progress, and heal the miseries of a war unprecedented in its extent and its destruction? The new rulers of France, who had originally disclaimed conquest, and deprecated war, are not now content with the undisturbed possession of all the territories over which the old government extended; grasping each day at new possessions, and forcing new allies into their train; their gigantic ambition hourly swells to a more enormous magnitude, and menaces new danger;—the vortex of war each hour involves a wider extent in its destructive range, and the final event, as it appears daily more uncertain and remote, must probably be more important and decisive: all is suspense and alarm, vague conjecture and awful hazard!

But, amidst this universal terror, let us not despond; the same over-ruling Providence still presides to bring light out of darkness, and out of evil good. The interests of virtue and religion will assuredly be finally promoted, be the preceding
trials

trials and dangers what they may:—the truly religious man can never entertain the slightest apprehension that genuine Christianity can be overthrown by any opposition which the powers of darkness, or the arts of infidelity, can raise: no, my brethren, the storms may rage, and the floods beat, but the sacred fabrick of the church of Christ will stand unmoved, for it is founded on the rock of Truth, and supported by the hand of Heaven.

But, my fellow Christians, though the final issue of the present formidable contest seems to baffle the calculations of political sagacity, yet if we trace the series of events which has led to this awful crisis, we shall perceive sufficient traces of the power of Providence effecting its purposes by the agency of men, though *they mean not so, neither do their hearts think so.**—When, not many years since, the monarch of France assisted the colonies, in order to reduce the power of his rival, and establish his own dominion on her weakness, and in the contest seemed to succeed, how little did he suspect that he was by this very act preparing the way for the subversion of his own authority?—When we recollect that the French nation was the first to establish the papal dominion; when we look to the torrents of blood she has shed for its support; who can avoid feeling the greatest surprise, mingled with religious awe, at

* Isaiah x. 7.

seeing her now spurning that authority, and aiming a deadly blow at its existence?

Nor does the same series of events exhibit less striking marks of the distributive justice of Providence, which punishes national crimes by national miseries.—We know that this unhappy nation had submitted for a series of ages to the yoke of despotic power, and an almost equally despotic superstition, till the abuses of both were so incorporated with every part of its constitution, it seemed next to impossible they should ever be shaken off; at the same time, vanity and licentiousness were permitted gradually to corrupt the morals, insincerity and infidelity to undermine the religious principles of the people.—Boasting of its honour and its gallantry, its sensibility and elegance, this nation affected to cultivate liberality of sentiment and refinement of philosophy, but neglected to study the evidence, and despised the humble and plain morality of the gospel of Christ.—And what, alas! has been the event of this criminal neglect of true liberty and pure religion? Endeavouring to recover that freedom they so long neglected, they have plunged into anarchy; and despising the revealed will of God, they have sunk into atheism and impiety. But let me not be understood to accuse the whole nation, or even all its rulers, of such principles and such crimes. I rejoice to acknowledge that

that, in the midst of such general depravity, many instances have occurred of steady virtue and humble piety; but the existence of such general depravity, and the avowal of such irreligious principles, is too notorious to be denied. The sacred bond of marriage has been cast off with contempt, and the pollutions of promiscuous intercourse sanctioned by law. All outward observance of religion has been proscribed, and its ministers massacred, exiled, while it has been attempted to deprive virtue of its consolation, and piety of its support, by questioning the existence of a divinity, and proclaiming to the multitude, that "death was an eternal sleep."

The practical result of such principles has been fatally experienced in that wretched land:—unprincipled ambition, greedy rapine, and relentless cruelty, have spread their ravages around, subverting government, property, and peace:—the miseries of exile, assassination, and war, have desolated its plains; and their traduced monarch, with his unhappy consort, murdered after a mock trial, and their guiltless child, pining to death within the gloom of a prison, have polluted the land with their blood; while the infatuated and wicked men, who strove to erect their power on his destruction, have inflicted on each other the most dreadful punishments, and sunk successively, party after party, by the same unrelenting cruelty which against him they

they exercised. Nor have the subjects been less wretched than their governors:—diverted from industry, deprived of commerce, distracted by civil dissensions, and harrassed by perpetual war, they have been butchered by thousands in the dungeon, or swept down by the sword; they have purchased a delusive semblance of freedom and the empty palm of conquest, by submitting to real servitude and domestic misery.

Such have been the crimes, and such the punishments of that unhappy state with which we contend; and now reflect and judge what but the mysterious hand of Providence can have sustained the almost supernatural strength of that portentous and fluctuating government, in spite of internal dissension, sufficient, as common reasoners would suppose, to shake the most stable authority, in spite of an external opposition, the most powerful which the annals of history record; still does Providence enable this power to proceed, though labouring under the horrors of internal discord, and almost of national bankruptcy; it still retains strength to inflict miseries on others, while it suffers tenfold misery itself. For what purpose is this, but to humble the pride, and to chastise the crimes of each surrounding state? And already has the awful visitation been widely and severely felt. The plains of Italy, Flanders, and Germany, have been laid waste by rapine, and
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deluged

deluged with blood. Holland has seen its cities seized, its wealth pillaged, and its trade destroyed. The proud despotism of Spain, almost without resistance, crouched beneath its foe; and both these countries, sinking from their rank as independent states, have been plunged into a war, repugnant to their wishes, and hazardous to their dearest interests, to gratify the ambition, and swell the triumph of their imperious conquerors.

Thus severely have other nations felt this heavy scourge; and have not we ourselves, my brethren, felt enough of similar chastisement to humble our pride, and rouse us from our security?—As a state, how much have we suffered from the heavy losses, and accumulated expences of a four-year's war; as individuals, how many of our brave countrymen have fallen, bearing arms in their country's cause; how many families at this moment mourn their dearest relations or friends, who have already perished, or tremble for the safety of others who are still exposed to the dangers of war! While our peace has been disturbed by the levelling principles of our enemies, almost as much as by their arms;—how frequently have suspicion and distrust, turbulence and faction, open discontent and secret treason, harrassed and alarmed us!—How often have our governors been compelled to curb such a dangerous spirit, by additional strictness in the execution, or
additional

additional rigour in the enforcements of the law! But, notwithstanding all this, we have undoubtedly hitherto suffered comparatively little. Still did Providence seem to extend over us its gracious protection, to “*put a hedge about us, and about all that we possessed on every side, to bless the work of our hands, and increase our substance in the land.*”^{*}— Possessing resources the most astonishing, and a constitution the most admirable, this empire felt the calamities of war only in its remotest parts, while its centre remained unshaken, almost unaffailed;—but, much is it to be feared, that we felt not with due gratitude, and acknowledged not with due humility, that Divine Protection which prolonged our repose; that we confined our attention to the secondary means, while we forgot the Supreme Guardian of our safety.

Should not the event which is the occasion of my addressing you this day, my fellow Christians, rouse in us that pious gratitude to God, which hitherto may not have been felt as strongly as it ought? But a few days since, and that danger which had so long been distant, and almost forgotten, seemed suddenly to approach to our homes and to our hearts. A host of foes, eager to let loose amongst us havock and war, suddenly appeared upon our coasts; and as

^{*} Job i. 10.

if to raise our attention to the true Author of our safety, no human aid was permitted to interpose for our protection. The same wind which wafted the enemy to our shores, interrupted all intercourse between us and that power on the superiority of whose naval strength we had relied for defence.

At this alarming crisis, had not that Being, who directs the powers of nature, and baffles with a word the best-laid plans of human policy, interposed in our behalf, consider for a moment what might have been the event; had this host of foes been enabled to disembark suddenly, and easily, inured as they were to danger, hungry for rapine, thirsting after blood, and desperate, because almost hopeless of return; what miseries might they not have inflicted before they could have been cut off!—Led on by a general, who even in France was deemed obstinate and sanguinary, who was familiarised to the horrors of civil war, and bore with him here, means, as he hoped, to excite and to arm rebellion; had he been allowed, even but in part, to execute his plans, what mischief might not have ensued! Had the elements which warred against him warred for him;—had the same Power which facilitated the conquest of Holland, arresting the course of the Rhine by a frost almost unprecedently severe, and making a smooth way for the armies of France over every obstacle which nature and art could interpose, facilitated

litated their progress here by similar means; who can calculate the consequences?—But the MOST HIGH in his wrath remembered mercy, designing to warn and humble, not to crush and to destroy—*He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he shot out his lightnings, and discomfited them.** That very period, when we were employed in celebrating the Birth of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and our Lord—that Jesus, whose laws our enemies have renounced, and whose authority they have rejected; that period was by them chosen as the moment to commence their attack, and was marked by GOD as the signal for their defeat. Blasted by continued tempests—some shattered on our rocks—others plunged into the deep—all baffled and dispersed; harrassed by toil, and weakened by famine, they have returned, such as could return, from whence they came, bearing back nothing but disappointment and dejection; and leaving us nothing but joy for our rescue, chastised by pity and regret at sufferings such as theirs, even though sustained by our most inveterate enemies.

Such has been our danger, such has been our deliverance. Shall we not prostrate ourselves, with humble gratitude, before the all-generous supreme Author of such a deliverance? Shall we not exclaim, in the inspired language of holy writ—*God is*

• Psalm xlv. 11.

*our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea: for the LORD of Hosts is with us, the GOD of Jacob is our refuge?**

But while we lament the crimes and the sufferings of our enemies—while we bend in fervent gratitude to God for his merciful interposition, let us take care that we accompany our gratitude with humble self-abasement, and that this merciful interposition awaken us to sincere penitence, and steady reformation. Let us be aware of being elated with the pride of the self-exalted Pharisee, who exclaimed—“I am not as other men are.” Let us not triumph in the calamities of our enemies, and say within our hearts, “they who suffered such things are the peculiar objects of divine indignation; doubtless our innocence has been our protection.”—God forbid!--if any are weak and wicked enough to think thus, let them consider well the awful warning which our LORD pronounced against the Jewish nation, when actuated by a similar sentiment, *Suppose ye that these Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*†—To guard against so fatal an abuse of Divine Mercy, it shall be my ob-

* Psalm xlv. 2. † Luke xiii. 2, 3.

ject, in the remaining part of my address to you, to dwell upon the practical inferences to which this important event obviously leads. I shall therefore endeavour to discover, and to point out the particulars which most strongly require repentance and reformation, if indeed we are resolved to *break off our sins by righteousness, that it may be a lengthening of our tranquillity.*

The first and most fertile source of danger and of guilt, which the example of that unhappy nation, whose crimes and whose enmity we deplore, calls on us with a warning voice, as if from heaven, to guard against, is the RAPID SPREAD OF IRRELIGION AND INFIDELITY, which saps the foundation of every virtue, blasts the happiness of the individual, endangers the peace of society, and will assuredly bring down the condemnation and chastisement of God. The reality of this danger, unhappily, cannot be disputed; we find the truth of revelation caviled at, and its divine authority undermined by every possible artifice and sophistry; the objections to our holy faith are dressed up with all the charms of wit, and pomp of eloquence, in various works of amusement and information, in the sentimental novel, and the philosophical disquisition, in the portable pamphlet, and the voluminous history;—we meet the industrious missionaries of modern infidelity spreading their tenets with a preposterous industry, in almost every company,
but

but always with most zeal when, from the ignorance of their hearers, they are sure to meet with least resistance: nay, such is their ardour for diffusing universally the blessings of their new philosophy, that they have been known to select the most bold and scurrilous invectives against revelation, and disperse them through the cottages of the poor, to undermine the religious principles of the peasant, which formed the only sure restraint upon his vices, and the only consolation which could sweeten the bitterness of his depressed and toilsome life.

Such is the activity of the foes to religion, and their success is undoubtedly too great.—If this activity and this success arose from an increasing zeal to inquire seriously into the truth of Christianity, or from any proofs of weakness in its evidence, or unreasonableness in its doctrines, which, after having escaped the researches of 1700 years, were now first discovered by the more extensive learning, and more acute penetration of this enlightened age, this zeal would have much to plead in its defence. The friends of truth, though they might lament that the gospel, which had so long inspired the best men with their best virtues and their sublimest hopes, should now at length prove a vain delusion; yet if discovered to be delusive, they must admit it ought to be renounced.—No apparent advantage even to the cause of virtue can justify us in designedly leading men into error as

to

to the most important truths, and inspiring them with false opinions as to their duty, their expectations, and their God.---But is it not notorious that the zeal, and the success with which infidelity is supported, are derived from causes very different from an increasing seriousness of religious enquiry, or from new discoveries of religious truth? Is it not notorious that, in the conduct of this controversy, levity and ridicule, declamation and buffoonery, are substituted by the enemies of revelation, in place of serious, solid arguments;—that passages misquoted, and facts misrepresented, and old objections repeated, while the clear answers to them are suppressed, form the strength of their case?—Is it not obvious that the corruptions and abuses of Christianity are perpetually confounded with Christianity itself, by these hasty reasoners. These men forget, that on such a subject as the existence, the attributes, and the moral government of God, difficulties must arise from the limitation of human reason and human experience; but that such difficulties form no counterpoise to the direct evidence, which is clearly understood:—they forget that all objections are inconclusive, so long as they cannot disprove the accomplishment of the scripture prophe-

* Leland's View of the Deistical Writers; and also Dr. Elrington's Sermons on Miracles, preached in the chapel of Trinity college, Dublin, 1793, printed for Mercier, Dublin, and Robinsons, London, p. 21 to 24—and notes, p. 255 to 259—and 296 to 303.

cies, the reality of the scripture miracles, the internal characters of truth and virtue which adorn and consecrate the sacred page, and the various external testimonies by which the sacred history is supported: objections not affecting these points, may prove the difficulty of the subject, or the ignorance of the objector, but cannot affect the main foundation of Christianity.

But, however weak the cause, however frivolous the objections of infidelity, can we wonder at its spread, when we know that every proud imagination, and every vicious propensity of the human heart, rises in opposition to the pure and humble religion of Christ?—when we know the sensual and the avaricious will be anxious to find some pretexts for rejecting its self-denying ordinances—that the proud will scorn its humility, and the resentful and malignant spurn at its meekness and mercy,—can we wonder the gospel should be openly rejected, or secretly despised, when a law of reputation prevails, which contradicts its plainest principles, which sanctions seduction and adultery, which legalizes fraud in the gambler, and ennobles murder in the duellist?—Oh! my fellow Christians, while we admit such principles, while we countenance such practices, we may preserve the external decorums, and the habitual professions of religion, but assuredly we are the farthest in the world from true Christianity.—What then is here the remedy?

medy? That each individual should examine his own heart, and ponder his own ways; that he should compare his conduct with the gospel, and conform to its laws; that he should endeavour to correct the depraved law of reputation as far as possible, and where he cannot alter it, that he should learn to obey the will of God, rather than the caprice of man. Nor is this all: every man should endeavour to promote in others, as well as to exhibit in himself, principles conformable to the gospel of Christ:—for this purpose, let him take care to secure in his own family, and to patronize in the lower classes of society, the invaluable blessing of a religious education.—As the poison of infidelity has been spread far and wide with destructive industry, let its antidote be distributed with a zeal worthy of the sacred cause. Let those works which exhibit the shortest and clearest view of the proofs and the doctrines of our holy faith, be offered to the acceptance, and recommended to the attention of all who are capable of profiting by their use; above all, let the scriptures, “which have God for their author, salvation for their end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for their matter,”* let those be explained to the understandings, and find a place in the cottage of every peasant. Let the ministers of God be unwearied in their pious labours, for educating the young, instructing the ignorant,

* Locke.

and reforming the profane; the spirit of the Most High will assist their exertions, and enable them to "*purify to himself a people zealous of good works;*" his blessing will descend upon them and upon their country, and secure to us tranquillity and happiness.

Next to the importance of true religion, that event we now celebrate inculcates on us the sacred duties of LOYALTY and SUBORDINATION, UNION and BROTHERLY LOVE. What, my fellow-countrymen, was to all human appearance the origin of that danger from which we have escaped?—What was it that almost invited our enemies to our shores, and elated them with the fond hope of meeting a friendly reception, or an easy conquest?—Undoubtedly the opinion, the false opinion, that we were disloyal and disunited, torn by internal discord, and duped by treasonable arts; but for this they had not dared to assail a nation, whose characteristic is courage, and whose force, when united, is resistless.—Who does not remember, when unsupported by any external aid, the name of the volunteers of Ireland appalled the trembling foe?—Who does not rejoice, that in the yeomanry of Ireland, we see the same spirit roused in the same cause? Yes, my gallant countrymen, be assured, that when it is fully known, that every hand and every heart amongst us is united to defend the peace and freedom of our native land—be assured, no enemy will dare to disturb our repose. To com-
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pleat and consolidate this union is now therefore the first duty of every good citizen, and every enlightened patriot—I am not, believe me, I am not one of those who would maintain the divine right of monarchs to tyrannise, or inculcate as a Christian doctrine that subjects should be slaves. The lapse of time may have introduced defects into our constitution, which, when the hour of public tranquillity shall return, ought to be repaired. The depravity of human nature may have produced abuses and mal-administration, which ought to be stigmatised and repressed, whenever, with safety, they can; but I do say, that the general system of our government secures more effectually the property, the liberty, and the life of every individual under its protection, than any other system which human wisdom has devised; and that within the memory of almost the youngest amongst us, this country has made more rapid advance in trade and population, in agriculture and wealth, in constitutional advantages and religious freedom, than any nation now existing, perhaps than any nation ever did make in a similar period, with similar safety.—Thus were we situated; the way lay plain before us to national opulence, respectability, and happiness. At this period, that nation, with whom we now contend, started from that lethargy of slavery which for ages had oppressed them; the wisest and the best amongst them looked up to the British constitution,

stitution, as the most perfect model they could find, and laboured to assimilate to it their own, as the highest blessing they could secure to their country. But an expedient so simple and so safe, which would have preserved the subordination of the existing orders of society, and guarded, as sacred and inviolable, private rights and private property; such an expedient would not satisfy the vanity of the speculatist, the ambition of the demagogue, or the self-interest of the artful agitator. Unacquainted, by any experience of their own, with the nature and the limits of true liberty, and scorning to profit by example, they plunged into all the mazes of wild and impracticable theories; the phrenzy of political innovation seized on every mind; abstract rights of man, general principles of government, were the subject of continual debate. The delusive and ambiguous sounds of liberty and equality caught every ear; the populace was declared the supreme sovereign, and rose to exercise its power. At that moment the same spirit of innovation passed like an electric shock from them to us—delighted to behold a great nation striking off its chains, and rising, as we hoped, to freedom and to happiness. All admired their spirit, many caught their ideas; some mistaken, but, I doubt not, well meaning men, were deluded by their visionary dreams of abstract rights and abstract equality. Forgetting that we stood on a completely different ground, that
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they had every constitutional blessing yet to seek, and that we had every constitutional blessing to risk, some would have followed them in their mad career; but the deplorable spectacle of their sufferings must have long since convinced every man, who meant well to his country, of the dire mistake; and should induce him to prostrate himself before his God, with fervent gratitude, for the blessings which, under our existing government, he enjoys; and, while he contemplates the sufferings which they sustain from anarchy and misrule, he should cling to his king and his country, with an affection increased ten thousand fold.—Were that nation our ally, as it is our enemy, this would be my sentiment. But when they come to insult our understanding with the mock offers of *their* freedom, and *their* fraternity—when they come to subvert, and to pillage, and to enslave, to rouse the fury of civil discord, and to organize rebellion—at such a moment, what shall we think of any who would be base enough to bring forward any topic to inflame or agitate the public mind; in my heart I believe that few such men exist amongst us. No;—it seems to me not amongst the least of those marks of the gracious interposition of an over-ruling Providence, that the attempt to overpower, by disuniting us, has produced the very contrary effect; that it has invigorated our strength by cementing our union; that it has probed the hearts of all our countrymen,

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and proved them sound; that where disaffection was most suspected, it has roused loyalty, and universally, that it has endeared the government to the people, by leading them to contrast more directly the protection that government affords their properties and lives, with the requisition and the guillotine, which lurked in the train of their insidious assailants; while it has endeared the people to the government, by exhibiting a spirit of disinterested, active zeal, and heartfelt loyalty, at the most trying crisis of alarm and suspense. On this ground now we stand, my countrymen, and it is a vantage-ground we never should abandon. Let every political and religious controversy sleep in silence; let every petty party and petty faction sink into oblivion; let us keep our constitution, as it is, sacred and untouched, lest, in attempting to alter it at this perilous hour, we should subvert and lose it altogether; let the only contention amongst us be, a contention of good offices, of mutual concessions, of mutual love. The rich and great must now feel more strongly the importance and the worth of the lower class of the community; it has appeared that loyalty glowed in the cottage as ardently as in the court; if then any one social duty be more directly enforced upon us by this event than another, it is that of *shewing mercy to the poor*. I do not merely mean the mercy of dealing out to the mendicant a portion of your superfluous

fluuous wealth—no, I mean that the great and opulent should study to diffuse happiness over all the industrious and laborious classes of society; that they should watch and labour, to contrive and to execute every safe and practicable expedient for their permanent interest and general good; that they should, as far as is possible, contrive to bring industry and comfort home to their doors; that they should patronize every scheme for imprinting virtue and religion on their hearts;—this is the true mode of *shewing mercy to the poor*, this is the true mode of securing the tranquillity of the state.—This is the principle of action; to others I leave the detail. I rejoice that there exists a society for promoting the general cause of virtue and religion amongst my countrymen, and that they have directed their attention perseveringly to the situation and improvement of the poor. Let the wise assist them with their talents, the powerful with their authority, and the generous with their wealth; and they may facilitate this work of mercy to the poor, to the good of our country, and the glory of our God.

One word to such of you, my countrymen, who now surround me, as have taken arms in your country's cause, and I have done.—It is not for me to praise your patriotism or your spirit; my feeble voice would be drowned in the loud plaudit of a grateful people—grateful to those who stepped forward at

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such an hour, and, next to the protecting hand of heaven, contributed most to preserve every blessing which renders life valuable to the virtuous heart.— But as the minister of God, I would tell you, that there is another, and a greater service still, which you can render to your country. You now stand prepared to protect her by your arms, may you not meet with any necessity *so* to prove your zeal; but one way there is of evincing such zeal, plainly your duty, and always in your power—contribute to the moral reformation of your country by *your own conduct*, and promote attention to religion, and reverence to God, by *your own example*;—adopt the fortitude and the public spirit of the military character, but beware of the errors and weaknesses which (as every profession is exposed to peculiar temptations) sometimes attach to it. I would particularly warn the younger part of you to beware of levity and dissipation, of idleness and riot, and intemperance. While you are soldiers, think not you are less strongly bound than ever to be modest and sober, serious and devout;—believe me, true Christian piety will add firmness to your courage, and dignity to your character. Remember, you stand conspicuous amongst your fellow-citizens—as all hearts esteem, all eyes regard you, your example must do great evil or great good; as *you* are perceived to observe or to neglect the public worship of God, the mass of the people will observe or

or neglect it. To yourselves I leave the inference: collectively you can do much. Scarce any part of the law of reputation, deep rooted as it may seem, which you might not reform at your will. Duelling, that custom so absurd in the eye of reason, so criminal in the sight of GOD, your fiat would instantly banish from the land. But I forbear—I turn from you as a body, to address you as individuals—to address all who hear me.

Oh, then! my fellow Christians, attend to the conclusion of the whole matter: if the public safety can be secured—only by the divine protection; if divine favour can be conciliated, only by public virtue and national piety;—if the virtue and religion of the nation, be nothing more than the aggregate virtue and piety of the mass of individuals, then let each remember, that by his own vices, he does all that in him lies, to draw down the wrath of heaven on the whole community, and by his personal repentance, and personal reformation, he does every thing in his power to secure to his country the blessing of his GOD.—Oh, then! let each who now hears me, retire to his chamber and be still—let him ponder these things, and be wise—let him not think that his impiety, or his vice, cannot singly be injurious to the state; his religion, and self-government, material to its welfare; as surely as the union of every single arm constitutes the strength of the public defence,
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so surely the conduct of each individual influences the national character, and contributes to conciliate the favour, or bring down the vengeance of God upon the entire community:—so that every vicious and irreligious individual is, in the truest sense, a traitor to the state. Let then this year, which has commenced in circumstances so awful, and so memorable, be to us an æra of humble penitence, an epoch of general reformation. And may the God of mercy strengthen our feeble efforts and weak resolutions, and enable us *to break off our sins by righteousness, that it may be a lengthening of our tranquillity.*

